

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the results of the needs and feasibility analysis for the Pinal County Corridors Definition Study. The findings documented in this working paper will be presented at public meetings to receive input from the public, stakeholders, and elected officials. Input received from public meetings will be combined by ADOT staff with the results documented in this working paper to develop corridor definition recommendations for consideration by the State Transportation Board. Specifically, this report presents:

- § Findings and conclusions of the needs analysis;
- § Development of corridor definition alternatives;
- § Feasibility analysis of corridor definition alternatives
- § Recommended corridor definition alternative
- § Summary of the next steps that are required for corridor development

## 1.1 Background Information

The Southeast Maricopa/Northern Pinal County Transportation Study (SEMNPTS), completed in September 2003 by the Maricopa Association of Governments, the Central Arizona Association of Governments, and the Arizona Department of Transportation, recommended \$12 to \$14 billion worth of transportation improvements for the southeastern Maricopa County and northern Pinal County areas. These improvements were recommended to meet the transportation needs of the 1.3 million people that are projected to live in the area roughly bounded by US 60 and SR 79 on the east, Loop 101 and the Gila River Indian Community on the west, US 60 on the north, and Coolidge and Florence on the south, by the year 2030. Recommended improvements included nearly 3,000 lane miles of new and improved arterials, an enhanced transit system, improvements to existing freeway corridors, and 95 miles of new freeways. Specific SEMNPTS recommendations included the development and/or improvement of four highway corridors that would improve mobility within the region for both Maricopa and Pinal Counties:

- § East Valley Corridor (I-10 to Florence Junction).
- § Apache Junction/Coolidge Corridor (I-10 to US 60).
- § US 60 Freeway Re-route (Baseline to Ray Roads), and
- § Williams Gateway Corridor (Loop 202 to US 60).

Since completion of the SEMPTS, several actions were taken to advance the development of the new freeway corridors including:

- § The CAAG Regional Council adopted a resolution and requested that ADOT conduct transportation planning efforts on the four corridors.
- § House Bill 2456 was passed by the Arizona Legislature assigning to MAG, CAAG, and ADOT the responsibility for carrying out further definition of the corridors identified in the SEMNPTS for right-of-way preservation and to provide the State Transportation Board with information to consider these corridors for adoption into the State Highway System by December 31, 2008.

ADOT has assumed responsibility for initiating and managing the studies required by House Bill 2456 and is conducting three separate studies for the four corridors – the *Williams Gateway Corridor Definition Study*, the *US 60 Corridor Definition Study*, and the *Pinal County Corridors Definition Study* (Apache Junction/Coolidge Corridor and the East Valley Corridor). Each study will provide recommendations to the State Transportation Board as to the types of future corridors (i.e. freeways, parkways), the general location of the corridors, and the jurisdictional

responsibility for the facilities. Although the *Southeast Maricopa/Northern Pinal County Transportation Study* serves as a resource to the three Corridor Definition Studies, the studies will reassess corridor need and feasibility.

In September 2004, ADOT awarded a contract for the *Pinal County Corridors Definition Study* to Kimley-Horn and Associates. The study objectives are listed below.

- § Confirm the need for the East Valley and the Apache Junction/Coolidge corridors (**Figure 1-1**);
- § Define planning-level corridor (2030) definition alternatives based on regional freeway planning principals, existing and future corridor conditions, and input from affected jurisdiction and stakeholders;
- § Perform a technical feasibility assessment of engineering, environmental, and land use compatibility characteristics of alternative corridor definitions;
- § Identify to the extent possible, feasible and preferred planning-level corridor definitions on the basis of the technical evaluation;
- § Document planning-level costs of corridor development (including studies, design, construction, and right-of-way costs) for feasible and preferred corridor definitions
- § Document the extent to which affected jurisdictions and stakeholders support the recommended corridor definitions.

The *Pinal County Corridors Definition Study* will result in technical recommendations and investment criteria so that ADOT and the State Transportation Board can evaluate options for the future jurisdictional responsibilities for the corridors. This study will include sufficient detail to provide a basis for the future establishment of geometric roadway alignments and corridor design concepts, the preservation of right-of-way, and the identification of required environmental clearance studies.

## 1.2 Needs and Feasibility Evaluation Process

As previously stated, the *Pinal County Corridors Definition Study* will evaluate the need for and the feasibility of constructing state highway corridors in Pinal County to supplement the future transportation system to be developed in northeast Pinal County. The results of the needs and feasibility analysis will serve as input to recommendations regarding inclusion of the proposed corridors into the state highway system.

### 1.2.1 Needs Evaluation Criteria

The corridor needs evaluation process includes four primary criteria:

- § First, it must be demonstrated that the future (2030) transportation network (without the proposed corridors) will not be able to accommodate the projected vehicle demand in 2030.
- § Second, the state highway corridor(s) must attract enough volume in 2030 to warrant a new roadway. Corridors that do not attract enough volume to warrant a new roadway will not be recommended.
- § Third, the corridors must provide some degree of relief to other transportation facilities within the study area. Corridor segments that do not attract a sufficient amount of traffic will not be recommended.
- § Fourth, the corridors must establish connectivity with the existing state highway system. Policies of the State of Arizona Transportation Board assert that the State Highway System should include routes that are primarily designed to carry through

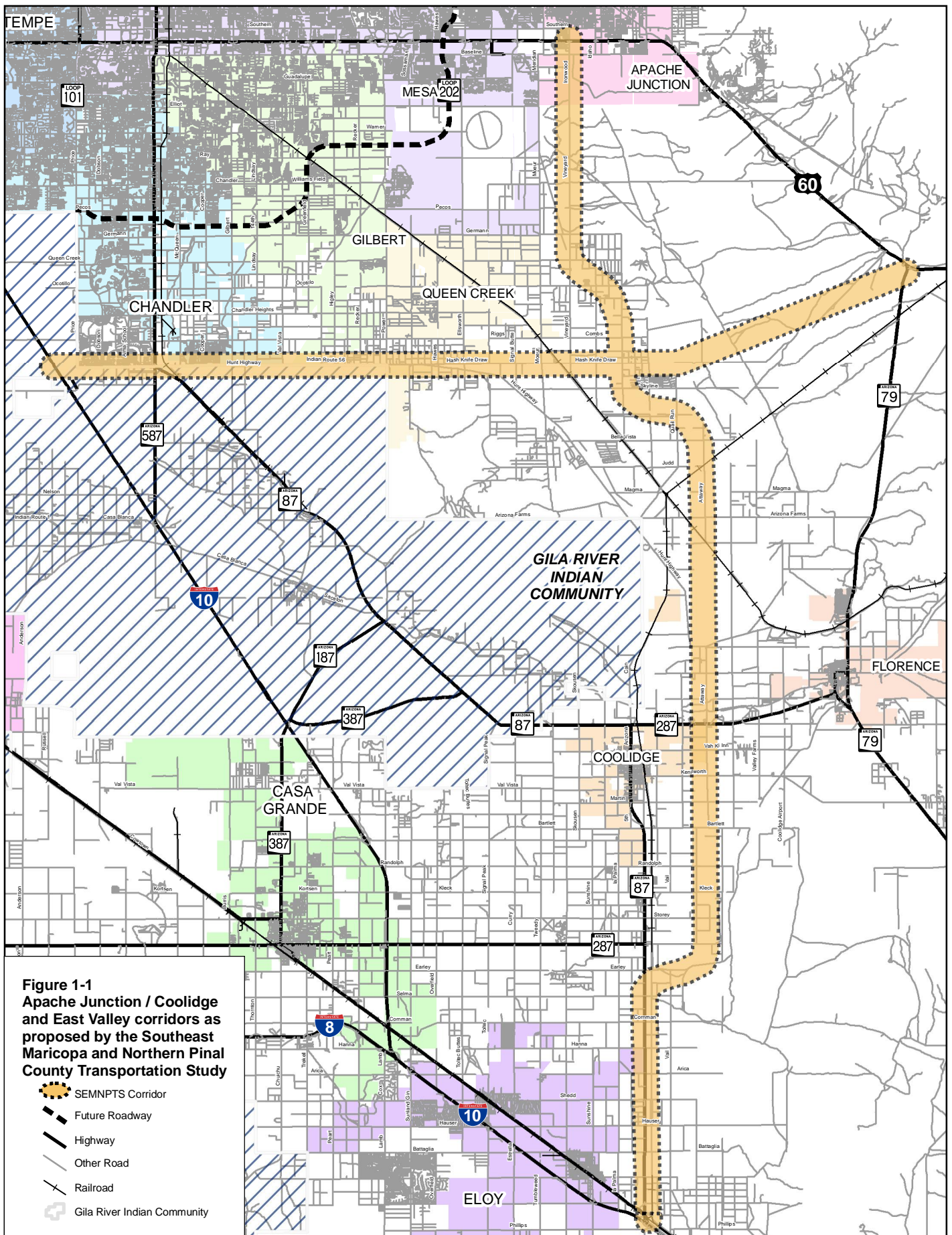


traffic and that connect regions and population centers to improve mobility and commerce throughout the state. Corridors that primarily serve local traffic are the responsibility of local jurisdictions. The primary purpose of the corridors will be to provide for interregional and longer intraregional trips that connect residents to employment, recreation, and other opportunities. Corridors will not be recommended for areas that are better served by improving the local arterial system.

The results of the needs analysis are documented in **Section 2** of this report.

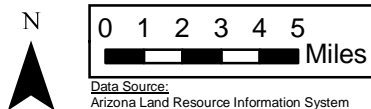
### *1.2.2 Feasibility Evaluation Overview*

The next step following corridors needs analysis is to determine the feasibility of constructing the corridors. The purpose of the feasibility analysis is to identify potential opportunities and constraints for the location of the corridor and to identify any engineering, environmental, socioeconomic, and land use compatibility issues that would make it impractical to construct the corridor. The results of the feasibility analysis are presented in **Section 3** of this report.



**Figure 1-1**  
**Apache Junction / Coolidge**  
**and East Valley corridors as**  
**proposed by the Southeast**  
**Maricopa and Northern Pinal**  
**County Transportation Study**

- SEMNPTS Corridor
- Future Roadway
- Highway
- Other Road
- Railroad
- Gila River Indian Community



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